

Russell Woods-Sullivan

General boundaries: Waverly, Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois.

Local √ 11/12/99
State
State Marker
National



4000 block of Stutevant streetscape.



Historic overview:

The Russell Woods-Sullivan Area reflects Detroit suburban settlement patterns as the city boundaries continue to push in a northwest direction. While most of the houses in the Russell Woods area (west of Petoskey Avenue) were built in the 1920s and 30s, the houses in the Sullivan area (east of Petoskey Avenue) were not constructed until the 1930s and 40s. The houses in the area represent several architectural styles of the period, including Neo-Tudor, Colonial Revival and Moderne. Many of the city's more established contractors and developers acquired lots in the area.

The names Russell and Sullivan are derived from Henry Russel, and Daniel and Jeremiah Sullivan. Russel was a prominent corporate attorney whose professional and business career thrived with Detroit's industrial growth and expansion. He became vice president of the Michigan Central Railroad Company, and was instrumental in the development of the city's southwestern manufacturing district, which was considered one of Detroit's choicest industrial locations. Daniel Sullivan was a partner in the firm of Sullivan and Driggs, which specialized in food products, and Jeremiah was a realtor. The Sullivan family farm became the foundation of the brothers' real estate dealings.

From its inception the Russell Woods-Sullivan area has been considered a desirable place to live for Detroit's middle class. Initially Anglo and Jewish families purchased houses in the area; however, by the late 1950s many of the original residents had moved to the suburbs and were replaced by African Americans. Many residents had a positive impact upon Detroit, such as Dudley Randall, Poet Laureate of Detroit and founder of Broadside Press and Florence Ballard, Diana Ross and Mary Wilson, former members of the "Supremes".

